

112 East 19th Street  
Room 1000  
New York 3, N.Y.  
December 5, 1961

Mr. George Meany, President  
Executive Council, AFL-CIO  
Americana Hotel  
Miami Beach, Florida

Dear Mr. Meany:

On the eve of the AFL-CIO convention we take this opportunity to salute the American labor movement for its many contributions to the cause of human freedom and progress. We wish also to commend the AFL-CIO for undertaking two years ago a major effort to organize farm workers in California.

The Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO, launched its drive in the spring of 1960 and conducted a campaign which helped to raise wages significantly, increased public awareness, and won the support of farm workers. In addition to material gains, the AWOC brought new dignity to farm workers.

We were, therefore, disappointed when the Executive Council decided to curtail financial support of the campaign last summer. While recognizing that this is a policy question reserved to the AFL-CIO, we respectfully wish to ask the Executive Council to reconsider this matter.

The nation's two million seasonal and migrant farm workers are the poorest, most underemployed, and least protected members of our labor force. They can expect to earn less than \$1000 a year and to be out of work—without benefit of unemployment compensation—half the year. They are excluded from virtually all labor and social legislation, and enjoy no protection of the right to organize and to bargain collectively.

Because of their poverty and powerlessness, farm workers cannot organize themselves without help from their brothers in the labor movement—the same kind of help that was necessary to organize the steel industry and the textile industry in the thirties.

It is our conviction that there is no factor more important to the welfare of workers than membership in a democratic union. We firmly believe that this affiliation provides the best means by which workers can effectively improve their wages and conditions and realize their rights both on the job and in the larger society. We believe that until farm workers have an organization of their own, they will continue to be oppressed, exploited, and cut off from the benefits that other Americans enjoy.



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The organization of farm labor may be long, costly, and difficult. Given the wholehearted support of the entire labor movement, it will be won. We gladly pledge our support to this effort.

Please accept our good wishes for a fruitful convention which will give added hope and meaning to the lives of Americans.

Sincerely yours,

Roger Baldwin

Patrick F. Crowley

Helen Gahagan Douglas

Professor Kermit Eby

Professor Walter Galenson

Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn

Dr. Frank P. Graham

Rev. Donald S. Harrington

Msgr. George G. Higgins

Rev. William C. Hughes

Rabbi Wolfe Kelman

Rabbi Edward E. Klein

Dr. Harry W. Laidler

Dr. Benson Y. Landis

Morris Laub

Professor Seymour Martin Lipset

Archbishop Robert E. Lucey

Rev. Alan McCoy

Dr. Robert J. McCracken

Dr. John A. Mackay

Rev. Dr. Julius Mark

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr

Professor Peter H. Odegard

Msgr. William J. Quinn

A. Philip Randolph

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt

Dore Schary

Rod Serling

Rabbi Samuel D. Soskin

Norman Thomas

Rev. James L. Vizzard

Rev. John A. Wagner

Rev. Galen R. Weaver

Rabbi Jacob J. Weinstein

Bishop Stephen S. Woznicki